

**Technology Panel Abstracts:  
Meeting the needs of families**

**National Extension Family Life  
Specialists Pre-Conference at the  
NCFR annual conference**

**November 7, 2006  
Minneapolis, MN**

**Title:** Lessons Learned after Eight Years of an Online Interactive Extension Non-Credit Course on Enhancing Couple Relationships

**Authors:** Charlotte Shoup Olsen, Associate Professor/Extension Specialist in Family Systems, Kansas State University  
Kathy Bosch, Assistant Professor/Extension Family Life Specialist, University of Nebraska

**Description of presentation:**

*CoupleTALK: Enhancing Your Relationship* was developed eight years ago as an online interactive extension non-credit, no cost course for couples wanting to focus on their relationship. Creating an online course was a recommendation from county extension faculty after *CoupleTALK* had been offered as a home study course. The course content is based primarily on John Gottman's relationship research and the technological design was the result of studying state-of-the-art internet-based instruction at the time of its online creation. A module menu was designed for ease of navigation that included the desired outcomes, assignments, activities, and review questions. An online threaded discussion for each of the six modules is password protected. The asynchronous course, offered twice a year with online enrollment and evaluation, is moderated on a rotational basis by a family life specialist in two states. Extension agents/educators are informed of enrollees from their counties/districts and they also have been invited to go through training to become a moderator. To date, over 500 persons have enrolled in the course. During the past year, a telephone survey was conducted with past enrollees (convenience and telephone available sample, N=30) to determine the longitudinal impact of the internet instruction. Lessons learned from creating the online instruction, conducting the course, and analyzing online evaluation and longitudinal data will be shared during the panel discussion.

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**Title:** Family Album Radio—And Beyond: The Use of Radio, Podcasts, and the Internet in A Family Life Education Program

**Authors:** Suzanna Smith, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida

Donna Z. Davis, M.S., Senior Producer Family Album Radio, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida

**Description of presentation:**

The purpose of this presentation is to inform participants about the use of multiple technologies in the development and evolution of *Family Album Radio*. We'll discuss the use of radio as an outreach medium, including its potentials and pitfalls, particularly with regard to evaluation and impact, and some of the questions we've grappled with as family life educators. We'll also discuss (and demonstrate) how we've been able to use *other* technologies to expand this program—the Internet, podcasting, and CDs—and the importance of interdisciplinary collaborations in building such a project.

*Family Album Radio* is broadcast twice daily in North Central Florida, where about 80,000 listeners public radio listeners hear research-based information about family life. Other states have requested the program via satellite uplinks and CDs. New technology will assist with tracking broadcasts nationwide.

A companion Web site provides more information and resources. *Family Album* is also archived on RadioSource.NET, a repository of radio programs produced by land grant universities and available on the Internet.

*Family Album* is also available in podcast format. With podcasting, listeners can download episodes of *Family Album* to portable stereos and personal computers, by using the podcasting feature added to the Web site. We've tracked a dramatic increase in Web site and podcast traffic through Web site visits.

We're also packaging broadcasts into CDs on certain topics for community agencies and Extension faculty. In short, we're utilizing a variety of media to stay creative and flexible while also providing solid information about families.

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**Title:** Using Web Site to Respond to Current Issues and Educate Hard-to-Reach Audiences

**Author:** Judith A. Myers-Walls, Ph.D., CFLE, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Purdue University

**Description of presentation:**

The presenter will describe the process of creating and maintaining two web sites—one created on Sept. 11, 2001 dealing with terrorism and children ([www.ces.purdue.edu/terrorism](http://www.ces.purdue.edu/terrorism)), and the other aimed at child care providers to support their relationship with and education of the parents associated with their programs ([www.ces.purdue.edu/providerparent](http://www.ces.purdue.edu/providerparent)).

The day after the terrorism and children site was created there were 6000 visitors to the site. Recently, in a 23-month period there were over 5000 visitors a month from 116 countries, although nothing new had been added in some time. An investigation of Goggle searches found that the terrorism and children site was in the first four sites identified when using seven different search terms (e.g., terrorism children; children terrorism; war children terrorism). The site appears as the 22<sup>nd</sup> result when searching for just “terrorism.” This high visibility comes from the fact that over 200 sites have linked to this site. It is anticipated that a revamped site will be posted before this panel presentation.

The site for child care providers was visited by over 9000 guests a month from 127 countries in a recent 19-month period. It contains materials for both child care professionals and parents. Responses to the anonymous Tell Us What You Think section have been highly positive. The combined focus on child care providers and parents is unique and appears to meet an important need.

The presenter will provide reflections regarding important steps and qualities of web site development and will encourage discussion of creative approaches to evaluation.

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**Title:** Web-based programs for parents: Innovative or archaic?

**Author:** Aaron T. Ebata, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Dept. of Human & Community Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Description of presentation:**

This presentation will focus on the potential for using technology to directly deliver web-based information to parents. I will first describe an evaluation of the Parenting 24/7 website and review studies of similar efforts. I will then briefly discuss the Just-In-Time Parenting *eXtension* project as a national extension effort. Finally, I will discuss the challenges that these types of efforts face in the context of the “Web 2.0” movement (featuring blogs and social networking sites) where credibility is based on useful, user-created information rather than on authority and expertise as criteria for value.

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